(e) The scheme is yet to be sanctioned by the competent authority.

(f) The normal lead time involved in implementation of a project of this magnitude is about 3-4 years after approval of the scheme by the competent authority.

[English]

Development of Sabrimala

2153. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Kerala has submitted any proposal for the development of Sabrimala and for providing adequate facilities to the millions of pilgrims visiting the place every year; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b) Government of Kerala has not submitted any proposal for Development of Sabrimala to the Department of Tourism for central financial assistance.

Late Running of 3009 Howrah-Dehradoon Express

2154. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether 3009 Howrah-Dehradoon Express is regularly running late for the last one year; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to run this train in time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) The punctuality of 3009 UP Howrah-Dehradoon Express has not been satisfactory due to certain reasons like accidents, agitations/ bandhs, alarm-chainpulling, miscreant activities, equipment failures, law and order situation etc.

(b) All efforts including intensive chasing and daily monitoring at different levels are being undertaken regularly. In addition, punctuality drives are also being launched.

[Translation]

Installation of Phone of Transfer

2155. PROF. RITA VERMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether telephone connections transferred from Delhi to Sahibabad area of Ghaziabad telecom district are not installed in time as per the norms prescribed by the Government;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of subscribers who have deposited the amount of demand note in Rajendra Nagar area of the above telecom district; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for early installation of telephone connections there?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Sir, Shifting of telephone connections from Delhi to Sahibabad area (level 62) of Ghaziabad Telecom. District is normally carried out as per prescribed norms i.e. within one month after the issue of OB, wherever the area is technically feasible.

(c) In Rajindra Nagar area (level 63), 32 cases are pending for implementing shifts due to paucity of telephone exchange capacity telephone exchange being 'frozen'.

(d) Expansion of the Rajindra Nagar Telephone Exchange (level 63) has been planned and necessary estimate has been sanctioned.

[English]

Computerised Post Offices

2156. SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Computerised Post Offices working in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government propose to open more Computerised Post Offices during 1997-98;

(c) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(d) whether the Government have allocated special funds for this project;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the criteria to open computerised Post Offices in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) There are 885 Post Offices in the country where the counter services have been computerised with the help of PC-based counter machines. Statewise list of these Post Offices is given in the statement enclosed.

(b) and (c) The programme of computerising counter services with multi-purpose counter machines is being implemented under the Annual Plans of the Department, already approved till 1996-97. The detailed programme of the Annual Plan 1997-98 is yet to be finalised.

(d) and (e) The programme of computerising counter services is being implemented under the Annual Plan Scheme of "In-house Computerisation." During the 8th Five Year Plan period Rs. 19.90 Crores have been provided for this purpose.

(f) The computerisation of counter services with multi purpose counter machines is initially intended to cover important selected post offices having adequate traffic and customer patronage where such machines can perceptively improve customer satisfaction through more responsive and efficient services.

Statement

State-wise list of computerised Post Offices as on 3.3.1997.

Name of the State	No. of Post Offices with computerised counters
1	2
Andhra Pradesh	59
Assam	26
Bihar	37
Delhi	63
Gujarat	79
Haryana	21
Himachal Pradesh	30
Jammu & Kashmir	07
Karnataka	69
Kerala	75
Madhya Pradesh	36
Maharashtra	101
North East	10
Orissa	30
Punjab	31
Rajasthan	42
Tamil Nadu	84
Uttar Pradesh	62
West Bengal	23
Total	885

Introduction of Train between Kanniyakumari and J&K

2157. SHRI K. PARASURAMAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce an Express train between Kanniyakumari and Jammu and Kashmir via Madurai-Chennai-Delhi-Chandigarh-Ludhiana-Amritsar-Pathankot route;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be introduced; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) Introduction of new trains, including on Gauge converted sections, is a continuous process on Indian Railways, subject to the resource availability, operational feasibility and traffic justification.

At present there is no proposal to introduce a direct train between Kanniyakumari and J&K via Madurai-Chennai-Delhi-Chandigarh-Ludhiana-Amritsar-Pathankot route.

(c) Due to operational and resource constraints.

Telephone Service

2158. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY:
SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA:
KUMARI UMABHARATI:
SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce such telephone service in which the users are visible to each other;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which it is likely to be introduced; and

(d) the places where such system likely to be introduced first?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Department has recently started providing Integrated Service Digital Network (ISDN) connectivity to general subscribers by using customer owned video conferencing devices on their lines can see each other while talking.

(c) and (d) ISDN service has already been introduced in 11 cities viz. Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai, Chennai, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Lucknow, Ranchi and Kanpur. It is likely to be introduced in other major cities of the country during the 9th Plan.

Problems Faced by Foreign Companies in Mines Sector

2159. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether some Foreign Companies are facing for mineral exploration in several States as reported in Pioneer dated December 24, 1996 under the caption, 'Mines exploration firms hit by State apathy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the remedial steps taken so far in this regard and with results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (d) The grant of mineral concessions is governed by the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development Act, 1957 (MM (R&D) Act, 1957) and the rules made thereunder. The applications for grant of mineral concessions are received and processed by the State Governments. The approval of the Central Government is required only in case of minerals covered under Schedule-I to the MM (R&D) Act, 1957.